

RESULTS International Australia Submission for the 2020-21 Budget

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Introduction

RESULTS International (Australia) is a non-partisan and non-profit organisation that has been working in Australia for more than 30 years through a combination of staff-led and grassroots-driven advocacy. We work with federal parliamentarians and through the media to generate public and political will to end

poverty. We are part of an international network called the ACTION Global Health Partnership which works towards ending diseases of poverty around the world.

We focus our advocacy on global health issues such as tuberculosis (TB), HIV, malaria, polio, child health, vaccines and nutrition, as well as education and microfinance.

As part of our focus on action to reduce poverty, we appreciate the opportunity to make proposals for the 2020-21 Federal Budget on how Australia can contribute significantly to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which Australia and other members of the United Nations endorsed in September 2015.

This year, the preparation of the Budget is occurring as the Government commences a review of the Australian International Development Policy. RESULTS Australia will also send a submission to this review, setting out our proposals for principles and priorities for Australia's official development assistance (ODA). However, we believe that it is important to proceed with some key initiatives, which are outlined in the following sections, before the review is completed.

In the last two years, we have seen an increased focus on Australian aid as contributing to the economic development of the Pacific Island countries, including through increased provision of infrastructure support.

This increased focus on the Pacific is a welcome development, provided that increased assistance from Australia:

- Addresses the genuine priorities of Pacific countries for human and economic development, which would vary between countries.
- Does not detract from essential assistance to other countries or through multilateral organisations to contribute to global development goals.
- Does not add to the debt burden of countries with existing high debt levels.

The requests in the RESULTS Australia Budget submission involve a return to strong real growth in Australia's aid over the forward estimates period, which will result in Australia's official development assistance reaching at least 0.3% of gross national income (GNI) by 2023-24. RESULTS Australia calls for Australia to further increase development assistance subsequently to 0.7% of GNI as per international commitments and sees getting to 0.3% of GNI within the forward estimates period as an important step towards this goal. Such an increase in aid spending will have significant impacts on poverty in the Asia-Pacific region and will also enable Australia to demonstrate leadership in the implementation of the SDGs.

As several replenishments of multilateral institutions or initiatives are taking place in 2020-21, this submission proposes a coordinated approach to multilateral contributions, recognising that the work of the different initiatives is complementary, and support for one initiative should not be at the expense of the others.

Other proposals in this submission focus on bilateral or regional initiatives which address high-priority health and education needs.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: That Australia's aid increases to \$4.7 billion in 2020-21, with a further increase to at least \$7.0 billion by 2023-24, reaching a minimum 0.3% of GNI in 2023-24.

Recommendation 2: That Australia commit \$275 million for Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance for the period 2021 to 2025

Recommendation 3: That Australia provide \$30 million per year to support research on TB.

Recommendation 4: That Australia's aid program provides an additional \$130 million over the 2020-21 to 2023-24 period for nutrition-specific programs, as a new commitment for the 2020 Nutrition Summit.

Recommendation 5: Australia's overall aid for education should increase to \$1.25 billion by 2023-24.

Recommendation 6: Australia commit to contributing \$180 million to the Global Partnership for Education for the period 2021 to 2023.

Issue: Overall Aid Volume

Recommendation 1: That Australia's aid increases to \$4.7 billion in 2020-21, with a further increase to at least \$7.0 billion by 2023-24, reaching a minimum of 0.3% of GNI in 2023-24.

The Need

The Asia-Pacific region, which is the primary focus of Australia's development program, is home to 58% of the world's hungry and undernourished people. Although significant progress has been made in reducing extreme poverty, significant further action is required in the coming years.

Examples of global progress in reducing poverty are:

- The number of people living in extreme poverty has declined by nearly two thirds since 1990.
- Each day, 20,000 fewer children under the age of 5 are dying than in 1990.
- Over the last 20 years, 2.1 billion people have gained access to improved sanitation.

The [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) build on these achievements, and call for the eradication of extreme poverty, including the following targets:

- universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all (SDG 6)
- free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education for all children (SDG 4)
- ending preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries achieving an under-5 mortality rate of no more than 25 per 1,000 live births (SDG 3).

The further action to achieve these goals will require a partnership between donor governments, national governments in low and middle-income countries and the private sector. Therefore, the changes in policy and funding will not only involve development assistance, but increased and improved aid will play a significant role in international action on poverty.

The reduction of Australia’s development assistance from just over \$5 billion per year in 2012-13 to 2014-15 to approximately \$4 billion in 2015-16 and subsequent years has obviously reduced Australia’s capacity to contribute to this progress. Many country programs and contributions to multilateral agencies were reduced by 40% in 2015-16 (remaining at this lower level since then), which has meant a narrowing of the focus of Australia’s assistance to individual countries and reduced capacity to complement Australia’s bilateral assistance with multilateral programs.

The Solution

Increasing and improving the focus and effectiveness of Australian aid will assist in making progress towards the SDGs and Australia’s own international development objectives. The expected level of Australia’s aid in the period 2020-21 to 2023-24, based on the 2019-20 Budget and forward estimates, is approximately \$4.0 billion in 2020-21 and 2021-22, and \$4.1 billion to \$4.3 billion per year in 2022-23 and 2023-24. This amount is insufficient for Australia to contribute significantly towards achieving the SDGs and falls short of the funding required to implement the Government’s own priorities for the aid program.

RESULTS Australia calls for an interim goal of increasing Australia’s aid to \$7.0 billion - or at least 0.3% of gross national income (GNI) – by 2023-24, which would allow for both the delivery of current important bilateral and multilateral commitments, and scope for new initiatives in the next four years. This growth path is consistent with increasing Australian aid to at least 0.35% by 2025-26, moving Australia closer to the average country effort for all OECD countries. Achieving this interim goal would place Australian aid in a position to eventually reach the long-agreed OECD target of 0.7% of GNI, a goal which the SDGs restate.

The table below indicates how Australia’s aid would increase as a dollar amount and a percentage of the national economy over the forward estimates period with RESULTS’ proposal.

RESULTS Australia’s proposed aid compared with current projections

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
RESULTS Proposed aid spending \$m	4,140	4,720	5,380	6,140	7,000
Proposed aid spending % of GNI	0.21	0.23	0.25	0.27	0.30
Assumed aid from 2019-20 Budget and forward estimates	4,045	4,000	4,000	4,100	4,275

Notes: The annual amounts proposed for ODA in 2020-21 and the forward estimates years are based on consistent annual growth of 14.0% in current prices. Assumed aid is based on the current forward estimates to 2022-23, and that aid would be maintained at the same proportion of GNI in 2023-24 as in 2022-23.

The Benefits

By adopting this proposed scale-up of Australia's aid, the Australian Government will demonstrate increased support for reducing poverty and improving quality of life in all countries where Australian aid is invested.

The Government will be in a better position to deliver the current objectives, and revised objectives following the review of the aid program, and contribute to achieving sustained economic growth and improved living standards for countries in the Asia-Pacific region, which are also in Australia's interest. With the renewed commitment to assistance to the Pacific from the Government, the planned increase in aid allows for increased contributions to development in the Pacific while also maintaining crucial support to other regions.

The proposed increase in aid by more than \$550 million in 2020-21 will allow for the Government to make some initial new commitments or expansions of existing programs in the next financial year and make accelerated progress towards its policy goals in the following years.

The following sections set out some initiatives to start in 2020-21 which will reduce poverty, improve health and education, and contribute to sustained economic growth. Several of the proposals are for Australia to increase funding to different multilateral organisations and initiatives, and the following section emphasises the complementary nature of these contributions.

Key Multilateral Replenishments

An overview of key multilateral initiatives for which we are recommending funding in 2020-21 is set out below:

- In June 2020, **Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance**, which has supported the vaccination of more than 750 million children since 2001, will be seeking renewed funding for the 2021 to 2025 period. Gavi has released the amount requested for the replenishment, which is \$US 7.4 billion.

Australia has contributed to Gavi since 2006 and pledged \$250 million for the 2016 to 2020 period. RESULTS Australia recommends that Australia contributes **\$275 million** for the 2021 to 2025 period, which would at least maintain Australia's share of Gavi funding (taking into account inflation and currency fluctuations). Increased vaccination is an important part of improving health outcomes through preventing illnesses and reinforces other health investments.

- In December 2020, the **Nutrition Summit** is due to be held in Japan. This will follow the 2013 Nutrition for Growth Summit in the UK, and a nutrition summit in Italy in 2017. The 2020 Summit would not have a funding target for one initiative or institution, but participating countries would be expected to commit to new or additional funding for nutrition.

Australia pledged \$40 million for nutrition programs in the Asia-Pacific region and joined the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement at the 2013 Summit. RESULTS Australia proposes that Australia commits \$130 million to nutrition-specific programs over 4 years at the 2020 Summit. The Australian Government recognises already through its *Health for Development Strategy* that nutrition investment makes an important contribution to improving health outcomes.

- In early 2021, the **Global Partnership for Education (GPE)**, which provides funding to low-income and middle-income countries to meet a shortfall in their plans to expand and improve basic education, would be seeking renewed funding for 2021 to 2023. The GPE was established as a World Bank initiative in 2003, and Australia has been a contributor since 2006.

While Australia has been one of the leading contributors to GPE, the Australian pledge at the February 2018 replenishment (for the 2018 to 2020 period) of \$90 million was 3% of total donor pledges at this event, below Australia's overall share of contributions since 2006. For the 2021 to 2023 period, RESULTS Australia proposes that Australia pledges **\$180 million** to GPE. Increasing education investment has multiple benefits, including economic and health benefits through increasing the use of family planning and leading to later marriage and childbirth for girls.

Issue: Commitment to expanding vaccination through Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance

Recommendation 2: That Australia commit \$275 million to Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance for the period 2021 to 2025.

The Need

In 1990, 5.5 million children died of diseases for which there are vaccines available. In 2017 that number had declined to 1.8 million, making the decrease in child deaths from vaccine-preventable diseases the primary cause of reduction in child mortality over that period.¹ However in recent years, gains in global vaccine coverage have begun to slow – the WHO estimates that 19.5 million infants worldwide are still at risk of vaccine-preventable diseases because they miss out on basic vaccines.²

Under-vaccination – children not receiving all recommended doses of key vaccines – also contributes to child deaths from vaccine-preventable diseases. In our region we have been reminded of the importance of vaccination against childhood illnesses, with the deaths of over 70 children from measles in Samoa during the final months of 2019.

The Solution

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance (Gavi) is a transparent and effective public-private partnership committed to saving children's lives and protecting people's health by increasing the equitable use of vaccines in lower-income countries. These vaccines tackle the most common causes of childhood illness and death, including pneumonia, diarrhoea and measles.

¹ Vanderslott, S. (2018) 'How is the world doing in its fight against preventable diseases?' <https://ourworldindata.org/vaccine-preventable-diseases> (accessed 9 December 2019).

² WHO (2019) 'Immunization coverage factsheet' <https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/immunization-coverage> (accessed 9 December 2019).

Gavi brings together governments, recipient communities and the private sector to bridge the gap between the need for and availability of vaccines, using innovative finance mechanisms to secure sustainable funding and pooled demand from the world's poorest countries to drive down prices and ensure adequate supply of quality vaccines.

Since its establishment in 2000, Gavi has supported the immunisation of more than 750 million children (approximately 327 million of them in Asia and the Pacific), which has prevented an estimated 10 million child deaths. Gavi's work supports Australia's objectives for a strong and healthy region through sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction. Beyond lives saved, the reduction in numbers of children suffering from preventable illnesses greatly increases quality of life and reduces the demands on scarce medical resources in poor countries. In the last 20 years, Gavi has supported the introduction of vaccines and provided grants for health system strengthening in 19 Gavi-eligible countries across Asia and the Pacific.

Gavi's next pledging conference will be held in the UK in June 2020. At this time, Gavi will be seeking financial commitments for the period 2021 to 2025. Gavi has released an [investment case](#) for this period, which calls for a minimum of \$US 7.4 billion (\$AUD 10.8 billion) in contributions. As the cost of many vaccines has decreased in recent years, in part due to Gavi's market-shaping activities, the Alliance is able to expand its vaccination support while making the same financial request as for the previous replenishment period.

For the 2016-2020 replenishment Australia pledged \$250 million to Gavi and has committed \$250 million to Gavi's innovative International Finance Facility for Immunisation mechanism (IFFIm) over the 20 years from 2010 to 2030. From 2006 to 2017 Australia provided \$364 million in funding to Gavi. Even the poorest countries need to contribute some of the funding to their vaccination programs, to supplement Gavi's support. As countries become wealthier their governments contribute an increased proportion of funding to their vaccine programmes, until they cover the full cost.

RESULTS Australia suggests that the Australian Government pledge \$275 million to Gavi for the period 2021-25, to support the acceleration of its work in reducing the burden of vaccine-preventable childhood diseases globally.

The Benefits

The numerous benefits of vaccination are well-known: better cognitive development and educational outcomes, lower healthcare costs, smaller families and healthier mothers, healthier and more productive workforces, and stronger economies.

Increasing Australia's contribution to Gavi would be consistent with the increased attention Australia has recently given to global health security, including through the establishment and operation of the Indo-Pacific Health Security Initiative. Increased support for Gavi would be a significant benefit for the countries in our region on which Australia's aid programme focuses, and also fit with Australia's other investments in health, including in 2019 renewed support for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, and an expected contribution at the 2020 Nutrition for Growth summit.

Australia maintains a strong voice on the Gavi Board with its representative, Sarah Goulding, Assistant Secretary of the Global Development Branch Multilateral Development and Financing Division at DFAT about to begin a term as Vice Chair. By maintaining a strong contribution, Australia will be able to maintain

its board seat and play a key role in its strategic direction, ensuring that Gavi continues to make preventing childhood diseases in our region a priority.

Issue: Funding for TB research

Recommendation 3: That Australia provide \$30 million per year to support research on TB.

The Need

Tuberculosis (TB) remains the largest infectious disease killer, with 1.45 million people dying from it in 2018. A total of 10 million people contracted TB in 2018, and 60% of cases are in the Asia Pacific region.

A key obstacle to making faster progress in reducing the toll of TB is that the most common forms of diagnostics, vaccine and medications for TB are limited in their effectiveness and we have not made the advancements in diagnosis and treatment we have in similar diseases. A key reason for this is the limited investment has been in research and development. The current TB vaccine is only effective among children and young people for a limited period, and the treatments require taking medication for extended periods with severe side effects.

Therefore, both public and private sectors need to increase action on TB research and development (R&D). The Declaration from the United Nations High Level Meeting on TB in September 2018 called for investment in TB research and development to increase to \$US 2 billion per year by 2022.

According to the latest report on TB R&D by the Treatment Action Group, global TB research funding was US\$906 million in 2018, an increase of US\$134 million from 2017 (and the highest level of annual funding so far). However, the 2018 funding figure is still less than half of the target agreed at the United Nations High Level Meeting on TB.

The Solution

To ensure that sufficient resources are devoted to TB research to bring improved diagnosis, vaccines and treatment into operation in a timely way, countries should devote at least 0.1% of total R&D spending to TB research.

If Australia is to achieve this target, it would need to more than double its TB research spending from \$US 9.6 million (\$A 13.5 million) to \$US 21.2 million (\$A 30 million) per year. The sources for this additional funding include any unallocated funding from the Indo-Pacific Health Security Initiative and the Medical Research Future Fund. In August 2019, the Minister for Health announced \$13 million for TB funding for the Pacific, including \$8 million for research into antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and drug-resistant TB in South East Asia and the Pacific.

The Australian Government should build on these commitments with support for R&D on TB in collaboration with other regions or with a global impact.

The Benefits

Investing more in research and development on TB will contribute to avoiding the significant economic costs of anti-microbial resistance, of which TB is the largest component. The Independent Review of Antimicrobial Resistance for the UK Government in 2016 estimated that the total economic costs of an

unchecked increase in antimicrobial resistance would reach a total of \$US 100 trillion over the period 2015 to 2050. Therefore, the benefits of the development of more effective vaccines and treatments for TB and other diseases could avoid economic costs that outweigh significantly the investment required.

Issue: Funding for Nutrition

Recommendation 4: That Australia’s aid program provides an additional \$130 million over the 2020-21 to 2023-24 period for nutrition-specific programs, as a new commitment for the 2020 Nutrition Summit.

The Need

Malnutrition in all forms is **directly or indirectly responsible for approximately half of the 5.3 million deaths of children under the age of 5 each year**, making it one of the largest causes of child mortality.

In 2018, an **estimated 149 million children were stunted**, or too short for their age. Most countries are making progress in reducing the number of children who are stunted, but overall progress remains slow. Since 2000, the number of children who are stunted has fallen by 25%. It is estimated that 49.5 million children (8% of children under the age of 5) **have severe acute malnutrition (SAM)**, which leads to wasting (the child is severely underweight for their height).³ While a child may recover, with sufficient help, from wasting, the impacts of stunting are irreversible.

The World Bank estimates that **countries affected by undernutrition lose at least 2-3% of their Gross Domestic Product** and incur billions of dollars in avoidable health care spending. Globally, the **direct costs of undernutrition in children have been estimated at \$20-\$30 billion per year**. Conversely, the economic benefits of action on nutrition are clear: for every \$1 invested in the reduction of stunting, one can expect roughly \$4 to \$35 in returns.⁴

Countries in the Asia-Pacific have among the highest rates of malnutrition in the world. For example, **49% of children in Papua New Guinea and 58% of children in Timor Leste have had their growth stunted**. The stunting rates in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu are also worrying at 32.8% and 28.5% respectively.

This has devastating consequences for children’s survival, health, cognitive and physical development and earning capacity into the future. It also takes an enormous toll on national economies like those of PNG. The 2017 report by Save the Children, *Short Changed: The Human and Economic Cost of Child Undernutrition in PNG* estimates that child undernutrition in PNG cost the economy \$US 1.5 billion (8.45% of GDP) in a single year (2016-17).⁵

Nutrition accounts for a small proportion of aid spending by most donors, with Australia spending approximately **\$30 million per year on nutrition-specific measures** (measures which address the immediate factors in child nutrition and development—adequate food and nutrient intake, feeding, caregiving and parenting practices, and minimising infectious diseases), and **\$101.5 million per**

³WHO, UNICEF and World Bank, Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates, March 2019.

⁴ The World Bank Group: *An Investment Framework for Nutrition - Reaching the Global Targets for Stunting, Anaemia, Breastfeeding and Wasting*, 2017.

⁵ Save the Children: “Short changed: the human and economic cost of child undernutrition in PNG,” June 2017.

year on overall nutrition measures, including nutrition-sensitive measures which address the underlying determinants of child nutrition and development — food security; adequate caregiving resources at the maternal, household and community levels; and access to health services and a safe and hygienic environment.

The Solution

In 2012 the World Health Assembly endorsed a Comprehensive Implementation Plan on maternal, infant and young child nutrition, which specified a set of six global nutrition targets that by 2025 aim to:

1. achieve a 40% reduction in the number of children under 5 who are stunted;
2. achieve a 50% reduction of anaemia in women of reproductive age;
3. achieve a 30% reduction in low birth weight;
4. ensure that there is no increase in childhood overweight;
5. increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first 6 months up to at least 50%;
6. reduce and maintain childhood wasting to less than 5%.

Achieving these goals will require additional resources from both international donors and national governments and households. For example, the World Bank, Results for Development and 1,000 Days have estimated that the combined national and donor-funded spending on measures to address stunting of children would need to treble between 2015 and 2021 to achieve the World Health Assembly stunting goal.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade released in 2015 the *Health for Development Strategy* for the Australian aid program which includes nutrition as a priority for future health investment. This inclusion recognises that nutrition, along with water, sanitation and hygiene, has a strong influence on health outcomes.

In 2020, the Australian Government is due to renew its *Health for Development Strategy*, and it would be timely to more closely integrate nutrition with other health measures in the new Strategy. In line with the estimates of increased funding required to achieve global nutrition goals, Australia should also increase its funding for nutrition-specific programs by \$130 million over the 2020-21 to 2023-24 period (a doubling of average annual spending).

The Benefits

Taking effective action to improve nutrition will assist in reducing the significant economic and health costs of undernutrition. As the Government's *Health for Development Strategy* noted, "good nutrition in early life lays the foundation for good health and productivity in later life—investments in good nutrition today are investments in the economic markets of tomorrow."

Undernutrition is widespread in countries in Asia and the Pacific, in spite of their economic progress. Taking further action on nutrition would be consistent with Australia's aid objectives of promoting sustained economic growth, improving health and education, and empowering women and girls.

Issue: Access to Education

Recommendation 5: Australia's overall aid for education should increase to \$1.25 billion by 2023-24.

Recommendation 6: Australia commit to contributing \$180 million to the Global Partnership for Education for the period 2021 to 2023.

The need

The global number of children and young adolescents out of school is increasing. **Today there are 64 million children *not* in primary school and 61 million adolescents *not* in lower secondary school.** A further 250 million children who are in school are graduating without having learnt even basic numeracy and literacy skills.⁶

Girls, children with disabilities and those living in rural areas continue to be disadvantaged in basic education. Fifty-three percent of out of school children are girls and estimates suggest that one-third of out of school children have a disability.

In Asia and the Pacific, roughly 19 million children do not have access to school. In Papua New Guinea, 43% of girls do not complete lower secondary school.

Despite these shortfalls in education delivery and with demand for education rising steadily, global commitments for education financing are declining.

The solution

Australia's aid program invests in better quality education so that young people gain the knowledge and skills they need to contribute productively to society. Priority areas include early childhood development and early primary schooling, which helps to ensure that children are healthy, safe and ready to learn; and promoting learning for all with a special focus on girls, disadvantaged children and those with disability, through teacher training, curriculum development and education infrastructure.

The previous Minister for Foreign Affairs, Julie Bishop, had described education as a 'central pillar' of Australia's aid program. Nevertheless, overall Australian aid for education has declined from over \$1 billion per year in 2014-15 to an estimated \$620 million in 2019-20.

Over the four years to 2023-24, the share of Australia's aid program allocated to education should increase from 16% towards 20%. As a dollar value, this would increase support for education to about \$1,250 million in 2023-24.

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) has a significant role in supporting developing countries to ensure that every child receives a quality basic education, with a priority for the poorest, most vulnerable and those living in fragile and conflict-affected countries.

⁶ UNESCO, *Global Education Monitoring Report*, 2019, page 287.

For the 2018 to 2020 period, GPE has received pledges of \$US 2.4 billion, which would allow the GPE to achieve most of the following goals for 2018 to 2020:

- GPE assistance extended to 89 countries and 870 million children and youth.
- 19 million more children completing primary school, including 9.4 million girls and 10.8 million children in conflict-affected and fragile states.
- 6.6 million more children completing lower secondary school, including 3.9 million girls and 3.9 million children in conflict-affected and fragile states.
- 1.7 million teachers trained, 23,800 classrooms built, and 204 million textbooks distributed.

In early 2021, GPE will be seeking renewed funding from its supporters, with the education goals and financial target for its next replenishment still to be decided. In line with the suggested doubling of the value of Australian aid for education by 2023-24, an increase in Australia's pledge to GPE for the 2021 to 2023 period to \$180 million would be appropriate.

The Benefits

The potential development benefits of education range from expanding employment and livelihoods, improving health outcomes, reducing inequality, and building stronger and more stable democracies.

Examples of the economic benefits of education are:

- One extra year of schooling increases an individual's earnings by up to 10%.
- Each additional year of schooling raises average annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth by 0.37%.⁷
- A dollar invested in an additional year of schooling, particularly for girls, generates earnings and health benefits of US\$10 in low-income countries and nearly US\$4 in lower-middle income countries.⁸

For further information on the matters in this submission please contact Mark Rice, Policy and Advocacy Manager mark.rice@results.org.au or Amelia Christie, CEO amelia.christie@results.org.au.

⁷ World Bank Group, *Comparable Estimates of Returns to Schooling Around the World*, 2014.

⁸ Global Partnership for Education, Education Data, accessed 16 December 2019.

<https://www.globalpartnership.org/results/education-data-highlights>